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ABSTRACT

This document describes the procedures which were followed in conducting a training program in the Taylor County, Georgia Public School System. The program which was conducted focused on training high school students in performing appropriately assertive behavior in various social situations. In this program, a number of high school students were selected on the basis of their leadership potential and emotional maturity. These students were given assertive training, as well as training and practice in the conduct of discussion groups. This activity constituted Phase I of the project. Phase II consisted of assigning other students volunteering to participate in the training program to discussion groups, each of which had 10-13 members. Each group was led by two of the students who had been trained in Phase I. While the foregoing describes the approach used in the Taylor County project, the material presented in subsequent sections can be modified to fit other requirements. One modification which occurred in the course of this project was an expansion of the initial focus on appropriately assertive behavior to one which included all aspects of interpersonal relations. (Author)

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Instructor's Manual

for

A PROGRAM FOR IMPROVING THE INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

(RP-D4-74-20)

by

L. L. Lackey

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
OVERVIEW	3
ASSERTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM	4
Reading-Discussion Notes Assertive Training (Optional)	8
Lecture-Discussion Notes Assertive Training	10
Group Leader Lecture-Discussion Assertive Training	23
ASSERTIVE TRAINING DATA SHEET	29
READING LIST	30

OVERVIEW

This document describes the procedures which were followed in conducting a training program in the Taylor County, Georgia Public School System. The program which was conducted focused on training high school students in performing appropriately assertive behavior in various social situations.

In this program, a number of high school students were selected on the basis of their leadership potential and emotional maturity. These students were given assertive training, as well as training and practice in the conduct of discussion groups. This activity constituted Phase I of the project. Phase II consisted of assigning other students volunteering to participate in the training program to discussion groups, each of which had 10-13 members. Each group was led by two of the students which had been trained in Phase I.

While the foregoing describes the approach used in the Taylor County project, the material presented in subsequent sections can be modified to fit other requirements. One modification which occurred in the course of this project was an expansion of the initial focus on appropriately assertive behavior to one which included all aspects of interpersonal relations.

An individual selected to serve as Training Coordinator for this program should have a background in the behavioral sciences and some experience in conducting training programs.

ASSERTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

Intended Personnel:

Phase 1. Volunteer high school students selected for leadership potential and emotional maturity.

Phase 2. Volunteer high school students.

Program Description: This training program consists of selected readings (optional), discussion of those readings with the Training Coordinator (optional), a lecture-discussion with the Training Coordinator who will conduct the group assertive training, and participation as a trainee in group assertive training.

Objectives: The training objectives of Phase 1 are to train the selected students to be (1) appropriately assertive themselves and to (2) conduct group assertive training for peers.

The training objective of Phase 2 is to train volunteer students to be appropriately assertive.

Procedure: The procedures subsumed in each of the following options should be followed in the conduct of this training:

Option I. -- The list of selected readings is included in the training program (see Assertive Training Reading List).

Phase 1.

1. Assigned readings will be completed.
2. The Training Coordinator will review the readings with each student to assess the student's level of understanding of assertive training. Available audio and video tapes

will be used in these discussions.

3. The Training Coordinator will conduct the introductory Group Assertive Training Lecture-Discussion for the students.
4. The students will be formed into assertive training groups of 10-13 members.
5. Participation in the group will continue until the student has participated in a specified number of role-plays and the Training Coordinator judges that the student's own behavior is appropriately assertive. Upon completion of the first half of this activity, the Training Coordinator will conduct the Group-Leader Lecture-Discussion for the students. Following this lecture, each student in the group should be selected to serve as group leader for at least one role-play.
6. Assertive Training Data Sheets for all students participating in this training should be retained by the Training Coordinator.

Phase 2.

1. The Training Coordinator will conduct the introductory Group Assertive Training Lecture-Discussion for the students.
2. Each student who was selected at the end of Phase 1 to become an Assertive Training Group Leader will be paired

with another student, and these two will be placed in charge of a group comprised of volunteer students, with each student leader's work supervised by the Training Coordinator until such time as the training is judged to be completed.

Option II. -- The list of selected readings is not included in the training program.

Phase 1.

1. The Training Coordinator will conduct the introductory Group Assertive Training Lecture-Discussion for the selected students.
2. The students will be formed into assertive training groups of 10-13 members.
3. Participation in the group will continue until the student has participated in a specified number of role-plays and the Training Coordinator judges that the student's own behavior is appropriately assertive. Upon completion of the first half of this activity, the Training Coordinator will conduct the Group-Leader Lecture-Discussion for the students. Following this lecture, each student in the group should be selected to serve as group leader for at least one role-play.
4. Assertive Training Data Sheets for all students participating in this training should be retained by the Training Coordinator.

Phase 2.

1. The Training Coordinator will conduct the introductory Group Assertive Training Lecture-Discussion for the volunteer students.
2. These students will be formed into assertive training groups.
3. Each student who was selected at the end of Phase 1 to become an Assertive Training Group Leader will be paired with another student, and these two will be placed in charge of a group comprised of the volunteer students, with each student leader's work supervised by the Training Coordinator until such time as the training is judged to be completed.

READING-DISCUSSION NOTES
ASSERTIVE TRAINING
(OPTIONAL)

Intended Personnel: Volunteer high school students selected for their leadership potential and emotional maturity who are to undergo both assertive training and training designed to prepare them to function as Group Assertive Training Leaders.

Time Required: Reading assignments are to be completed on a proficiency basis, i.e., the time will vary among the individuals involved.

Discussion Leader: The Training Coordinator who will serve as discussion leader should be experienced in the conduct of group assertive training.

Material Required:

1. Assertive Training Reading List (copy for each student).
2. Audio tapes by Lazarus:
   a. Thoughts and Feelings
   b. Establishing Self-Worth
   c. Developing Emotional Freedom
3. Video tape by Turner:
   Assertive Training

Procedure:

1. Assign reading list. Students should be instructed to read in the order indicated to the extent that the references are available at the time required.

2. When the students have completed Your Perfect Right, introduce the Lazarus tapes and discuss group assertive training techniques (generally following the model indicated in Your Perfect Right). Discussion sessions should be scheduled no less frequently than every other day.
3. As each subsequent article is completed, include its contents in the discussion in order to assure student comprehension of it.
4. Approximately upon completion by the students of the first half of the readings, view Turner's video tape and point out to the students his use of modeling and positive reinforcing techniques.
5. When the students have completed at least half of the reading list, they should be formed into assertive training groups with at least ten students in each group.
6. Discussion of the readings with the students and of the mechanisms and events associated with group assertive training should continue until the Assertive Training Reading List has been completed.

LECTURE-DISCUSSION NOTES
ASSERTIVE TRAINING

Intended Personnel:

Phase 1. Students selected on the basis of leadership potential and emotional maturity who may serve as Assertive Training Group Leaders in Phase 2.

Phase 2. All students volunteering to participate in assertive training groups.

Personnel Grouping: The lecture-discussion should be delivered to the students formed into groups of approximately 12 students each.

Scheduled Presentation:

Phase I. If Assertive Training Option I is used, this lecture-discussion should be presented following completion of at least the first half of the Assertive Training Reading List and the discussion of those readings with the Training Coordinator (see Reading Discussion Notes).

In the event that Assertive Training Option II is selected, this lecture-discussion should be presented at the time of the initial meeting.

Phase II. This lecture-discussion should be presented at the time of the first meeting.

Presentor: This lecture-discussion is intended to be presented by the Training Coordinator.

Material Required: Chalkboard or other writing surface of sufficient size for simultaneous viewing by all trainees.

Outline:

1. Introduction--discuss the importance of appropriate interpersonal relations.
2. Construct visual aids to introduce non-assertive (passive, submissive, non-reactive), assertive, and aggressive (over-reactive) behaviors. Discuss unpleasant side effects and the advantages of "winning."
3. Present the seven-step Assertive Training Model.
   a. List each step on the chalkboard.
   b. Discuss each step as it is listed.
4. Emphasize the need for Transfer of Training and for ending all role-play sequences on a positive note.
5. Emphasize the use of a shaping model and total reliance on positive reinforcement.

VISUAL AIDS

1.

	← Interactive Behavior Continuum →		
	Submissive	Assertive	Aggressive
Are objectives usually obtained?	No	Yes	Yes
Unpleasant consequences of behavior?	Yes	No	Yes
Examples	Low self-esteem Depression Anxiety Withdrawal		Rejection Dislike Anxiety Target of aggression

THE GROUP ASSERTIVE TRAINING MODEL

2.

Step 1. Investigate

Step 2. Role-play

Step 3. Feedback and Guidance

Step 4. Model

Step 5. Feedback and Guidance

Step 6. Rehearsal

Step 7. Reinforcement

T.O.T.

Content Description: This section presents general information to be included in the lecture. It is not intended that this constitute a comprehensive listing of all content to be covered, but, rather, is intended to serve as the core of the lecture, with the selection of additional material left to the discretion of the Training Coordinator.

1. Introduction - Everyone interacts with a wide variety and a large number of others each day. The purpose of this training is to increase the individual's competence in interpersonal relations. Most people have been in situations which they felt that they did not handle as well as they might have. This training program is intended to help people deal more effectively with others, in a variety of situations. To be successful, we need the ability to deal effectively with others.

Training Note

1. It should be kept in mind that student participation is not only desirable, but may prove critical to the effectiveness of the training program. Attempt to involve the students to the maximum feasible extent.

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2. Description of visual aids and associated lecture material -

   a. INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOR CONTINUUM

There is a range of ways in which we can act with others. Many of us have, over time, developed a general way of acting with others. The extremes of this range are aggressive and submissive. While few peoples' behavior is like either of these extremes all the time, we can say that some people are generally submissive or aggressive in dealing with others. The generally aggressive person tends to run over other people and take advantage of them. The generally submissive person tends to do what other people want, and is taken advantage of.

Training Notes

1. Do not make any reference to the assertive position until both aggressive and submissive behavioral styles have been completely discussed.
2. Discuss the probability of each style facilitating the acquisition of objectives, or of "winning" in social situations.
3. Discuss the extent to which unpleasant consequences can be elicited by each of the two behavioral styles.
4. Cover the types of consequences which might occur for both the generally aggressive and generally submissive style.

There is a behavioral style that falls between those two extremes. This style has been called assertive. Exactly what might constitute appropriate assertive behavior in a given interpersonal encounter, as opposed to inappropriate submissive or aggressive behavior, depends largely upon the frame of reference of the individual involved. A behavior exhibited by a black adolescent toward a white school official might be judged submissive by a militant and aggressive (or at least disrespectful) by many adult whites, yet it might be judged quite appropriate by his black and white age peers who do not share all the views of either of the more critical groups.

The determination of what constitutes appropriate interactive behavior for an individual in almost any situation cannot be determined by non-peer groups, if unpleasant side effects such as previously discussed are to be avoided. It must be determined by those who share, or at least are sensitive to, the individual's values and sensitivities. In addition, it should be determined after some consideration has been given to the possible effect such behavior would have upon those with whom he is interacting, since appropriately assertive behavior acknowledges the interests of all parties concerned.

Simply defining an appropriate manner of behaving in interpersonal interactions, even if done by peers, can help very few people, so far as changing their behavior is concerned. Almost everyone who has behaved in a manner he judged to be inappropriate in a given situation knew, in retrospect, how he would like to have behaved. Seldom, however,

does such after-the-fact knowledge help him in his next encounter.

When we refer to the assertive style of interaction, we are talking about ways of behaving in dealing with others. There are a number of behaviors that are included in the category of the assertive style (Rathus, 1973). These are:

1. Assertive expressions. Refuse to let others take advantage of you. Demand your rights. Insist upon fair and just treatment. Examples: "I was here first," "I'd like more milk, please," "Excuse me, but I have to go now," "Please turn down the TV," "This place is a mess," "You have kept me waiting here for half an hour," "This steak is well-done and I ordered it medium-rare."

2. Express emotions. Communicate your likes and dislikes spontaneously. Don't hide your emotions; express your feelings openly and frankly. Be honest in answering questions. Examples: "What a cool shirt!," "I am disgusted with that man," "How great you look!," "I hate this heat," "I'm really tired," "Since you ask, I much prefer you in another type of outfit."

3. Meeting others. Be direct and open with those whom you would like to know better. Shyness or a feeling of not knowing what to say shouldn't keep you from meeting others. Express your pleasure at seeing them both verbally and nonverbally. Examples: "Hi, how are you"?, "Hello, I haven't seen you in months," "What are you doing with yourself these days"?, "How do you like working at _____"?, "Taking any good courses"?.

4. Disagreeing with others. When you disagree with someone, don't fake agreement just to "keep the peace," e.g., smiling or nodding. Either disagree actively when you are sure of your ground, or change the topic, or terminate the interaction.

5. Questioning others. If you feel a request by a person in power or authority does not sound reasonable, ask why you should do it. Mature individuals should not accept authority alone. Request explanations from teachers, relatives, and other authority figures that are convincing. Express your willingness to honor voluntary commitments and to accept reasonable suggestions, but make explicit your unwillingness to respond to anyone's whim.

6. Discussing personal experiences. If you feel your accomplishments are worthwhile or interesting, tell others about them. Let people know how you feel about things. Relate your experiences. Do not monopolize conversations, but do not be afraid to discuss your experiences.

7. Accepting compliments. Don't knock yourself or become flustered when someone compliments you with sincerity. At a minimum, a sincere "Thank you" will suffice. Or, reward the complimenter by saying, "That's an awfully nice thing to say. I appreciate it." Rewarding, rather than punishing, others for complimenting you is mutually satisfying. When appropriate, extend compliments. For example, if someone says, "What a beautiful sweater!," respond, "Isn't it a lovely color? I had a hard time finding it."

8. Expressing opinions. While at times you may wish to give your basis for an opinion, don't be pushed into justifying every opinion by someone who takes issue with every comment. You might say something like, "Are you always so disagreeable"? or "I have no time to waste arguing with you," or "You seem to have a great deal invested in being right regardless of what you say, don't you"?.

9. Eye contact. In interacting with others, don't avoid eye contact, but look directly into their eyes.

As you can see, quite a few things need to be considered when interacting with others. It is difficult to define just exactly what "assertiveness" means, but behaviors such as those just described serve to illustrate the concept.

But remember what we discussed before, appropriately assertive behavior is defined by existing norms of the peer group. In addition, appropriately assertive behavior includes consideration for the rights of others, as well as refusal to allow violation of your own rights.

b. GROUP ASSERTIVE TRAINING MODEL

Rather than just providing peer suggestions concerning appropriate assertiveness in a variety of social situations, this training program includes the demonstration of appropriate behavior for those students desiring to improve their interpersonal competence. In addition, opportunities will be afforded for practicing the assertive behaviors involved and for receiving feedback from peers concerning the

performance. The techniques to be employed in this training program include (1) assertive behavior modeling by more skillful peers, (2) behavior rehearsal through role playing the desired assertive behavior with peers, and (3) feedback concerning role-played performance through structured critiques conducted by peers and through video tape playback (latter is optional).

These techniques have been combined to form a training model consisting of a seven-step procedure which will enable participants to develop a repertoire of behaviors which, as judged by themselves and their peers, are appropriate and should be employed in anticipated interpersonal interactions. The seven steps are repeated, usually in sequence, until each participant has achieved the level of interpersonal competence and confidence desired. The ideal number of participants at any one time is about 12 (cf Alberti & Emmons, 1970).

Training Note

1. At this point begin construction of this visual aid on the chalkboard. Describe each step thoroughly, in accordance with the following material.

Step 1. Investigate: A member of the group volunteers a description of an experience which he felt was socially unrewarding to him. This might be anything from being unable to ask a girl for a date to responding aggressively to a racial slur. (It should be

noted that the level of relative incompetence represented by the behavior described is to some extent a function of how long an individual has participated in interpersonal relations training with the particular group.) The volunteer is questioned by the group to define the parameter involved in order to facilitate subsequent role playing.

Step 2. Role Play: The volunteer and another member of the group role play the situation described in Step 1. The volunteer role plays himself, and the other group member plays the individual with whom the volunteer's encounter took place. The goal of the volunteer at this step is to do the best he can to improve upon his original and unsatisfactory (by his judgment) performance. The role play is video recorded (optional). If the described situation involves several people, an appropriate number of volunteers will be required.

Step 3. Feedback and Guidance: Upon completion of Step 2, the group provides feedback to the volunteer concerning the favorable verbal and non-verbal components of his performance. The video recording is used where appropriate to call attention to aspects of his performance which can be reinforced. Suggestions are made (carefully avoiding negative criticism) that could lead to improved performance in such situations.

Step 4. Modeling: The situation role played in Step 2 is repeated, but this time another group member takes the place of the volunteer and models the desired assertive behavior as defined by the group during Step 3.

Step 5. Feedback and Guidance: Step 5 is similar to Step 3 in that the modeled behavior is now discussed for the edification and guidance of the volunteer.

Step 6. Rehearsal: The volunteer again role plays the same situation, this time incorporating the guidance received from his peers. At this point, he is actually rehearsing his role in an anticipated real-life encounter.

Step 7. Reinforcement: The performance exhibited during Step 6 will be an improvement over that exhibited earlier. It is appropriate at this point for the group to compliment the volunteer on his achievement and encourage his practice of the interpersonal skills he is acquiring in real-life situations. (A frequent occurrence in such training is that members of the group rig situations outside the group context which permit the volunteer to achieve reinforcement as a consequence of the successful employment of the rehearsed behavior. Such efforts, of course, are to be encouraged.)

The seven-step procedural model described above is designed to permit definition of approximate behaviors by one's peers and to capitalize upon the reinforcing properties of peer approval. To the extent that an individual receives positive reinforcement for engaging in assertive behavior, the greater the likelihood that such behavior will generalize to a wide range of social situations.

Procedural Points.

Obviously, an individual who might be considered grossly deficient in interpersonal relations skills might be too self-conscious to engage

in the training described above or too sensitive to accept adverse criticism concerning his performance during training sessions. These two potential problems are minimized through specific techniques. First, all participation is voluntary; no one is required to engage in role playing activities unless he wants to, but he is free to observe and to participate in all other aspects of the training at his own option. Second, comments concerning participants' performance during modeling and role playing are required to be positive and constructive in nature. A procedural rule employed in each training session is that negative comments are not permitted, but rather that desired assertive behavior is shaped exclusively through use of positive reinforcement.

Training Notes

1. Summarize the lecture to this point
2. Determine whether there are any questions
3. If time is available, go immediately into application of the training model.

GROUP LEADER LECTURE-DISCUSSION
ASSERTIVE TRAINING

Intended Personnel: Any student who may later serve as an Assertive Training Group Leader.

Time Required: Approximately one hour.

Discussion Leader: Training Coordinator

Outline: The following represents an outline of the points to be covered during this session.

Training Notes

1. Attempt to elicit student participation in discussion of these points.
2. Role-playing to demonstrate certain points should be used where time allows.

I. Points which every Assertive Training Group Leader should keep in mind.

   1. The group leader is not an expert or an authority, and cannot answer all the questions which will be raised nor offer solutions for all the problems which are presented.
   2. The group leader's chief function is to keep the discussion in the topic being considered and to help the group summarize its thinking and arrive at conclusions. The group leader plays an active but non-directive role

in stimulating discussion and encouraging realistic situational analysis.

3. The group leader should keep in mind that every member of the group can help by entering into the discussion and speaking freely, giving the group the benefit of their personal viewpoint and unique experiences, and by giving others a chance to express their opinions.
4. The group leader should not present special personal ideas to the group to influence their decisions, all decisions should represent the collective thinking of the group.
5. The group leader should exert and maintain sufficient control such that only one group member is speaking at any particular time.
6. The group leader should encourage each member to express opinions fully, without being unnecessarily lengthy.
7. The group leader should not address questions to the group as a whole. If a question is to be asked, address it to a specific member, especially one demonstrating a low level of participation.
8. The group leader should attempt to ask questions that require members to carefully consider the situation before responding.

9. The group leader should encourage the expression of different points of view.

10. The group leader should periodically summarize the group discussion to that point, but should not repeatedly cover the same point(s).

11. The group leader must strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to the open expression of feelings. By requiring that comments be positively phrased, no group member will hesitate to participate due to fear of negative comments from the group.

II. Application of the assertive group training model.

1. Objectives most likely to be achieved.

a. Cognitive insight into practical problems of interaction.

b. Insight into possible methods for dealing with such problems.

c. An increased awareness of a diversity of viewpoints that may exist concerning a single problem.

d. An increased understanding of the viewpoints of others.

e. An increased awareness that open communication is required to effectively interact with others having differing viewpoints.

f. Experience in diagnosing interpersonal behavior.

2. Points relevant to application of the model.

   a. Follow the discussion model.

      1. Ask for a volunteer to describe an interpersonal situation which that individual felt could have been handled more effectively.

      2. Have the volunteer and one other person role-play the described situation.

      3. Elicit observations, suggestions, and comments from the group members. It is important that these be stated in a positive manner.

      4. Briefly summarize the results of the discussion in the form of behavioral suggestions, what the actor might do to improve the effectiveness in dealing with that situation.

      5. Ask for another volunteer to model the suggestion.

      6. Elicit additional comments from the group members concerning the perceived effectiveness of the modified behavior exhibited in the role-play.

      7. Comprehensively summarize the suggestions for the original volunteer.

      8. Request that the original volunteer replay the situation, attempting to incorporate the pooled group suggestions.

9. Elicit additional positive comments from group members, including one or more references to the observed improvement in the volunteer's method of dealing with the situation.

10. Emphasize that this represents rehearsal for the use of the modified behavior in social situations similar to the one originally role-played.

3. Additional considerations in model application.

a. In the Investigation step, don't question the volunteer too deeply with respect to motives, as this may produce defensiveness and discourage future participation. During the Investigation step, the volunteer should be requested to identify the objective which he (she) had in mind during the original situation. In other words, what was the volunteer attempting to accomplish through interaction with the other(s) in the situation. If the outcome of the interaction was not satisfying, most likely the objective was not attained. In order to develop effective guidance for achieving an objective, the objective must be clearly and specifically stated.

b. For the Role-Play step, the group leader and all actors should confer prior to the role play to insure that each

role player thoroughly understands what is to be done. This precaution frequently serves to increase the realism of the role play.

c. In the Feedback and Guidance step, after substantial guidance has been elicited from the group members, the volunteer should be requested to select the technique which seems most natural.

   Remember - The guidance activity consists basically of identification of alternative methods for successfully handling a specific type of social interaction.

d. The group leader should have several situations in mind which can be role played if the group members do not have, or will not volunteer, an instance of ineffective interaction.

e. Care should be taken during the initial group meeting so that members of the various ethnic groups represented in the session do not sit as a block, but are intermingled. Intermingling members of the ethnic groups facilitates active discussion among the group members.

ASSERTIVE TRAINING DATA SHEET

This form is used by the Assertive Group Training Leader to record the situations volunteered by various group members. A sheet is assigned each group member. These records can be used in one or more of the following ways: (1) the frequency of volunteering on the part of each member can readily be determined, (2) the type(s) of situations presenting the most difficulty to members can easily be identified, and (3) the transfer of training aspect can be followed-up through asking a volunteer at a later date whether the modified behaviors have been used in a situation similar to that originally described.

The data sheet should take the following form:

ASSERTIVE TRAINING DATA SHEET

Group member_____

Training dates: From_____ To_____

Role Play Date	Description of Situation	Comment

Reading List

Assertive Training

Alberti, R. B. & Emmons, M. L. Your Perfect Right. San Luis Obispo: Impact, 1970.

Bandura, A. Principles of Behavior Modification. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969. See Chapter III, Modeling and Vicarious Processes.

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Lazarus, R. O. Behavior Therapy and Beyond. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971. See pp. 132-133.

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